



# JOHNSONIAN NEWS LETTER

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## FIFTEEN YEARS.

Just fifteen years ago this December the Johnsonian News Letter first made its appearance as three mimeographed sheets which were handed out at the 1940 Modern Language Ass'n meeting in Boston. Now as we round out volume XV we look back with many happy recollections.

The original idea came from Jim Osborn, and through the years he has been our staunchest supporter. He was convinced that there was a need for some sort of a medium for the exchange of ideas about eighteenth-century research, some informal way that scholarly chit-chat could be passed around. Time has shown how right he was. Once the scheme caught on, many others helped generously with suggestions and copy. Unfortunately, to mention any of their names, and possibly to omit others, might set up invidious distinctions. So, instead, we thank you one and all. Without your loyal and continuing backing the News Letter would never have been able to continue this long.

As some of you will remember, the JNL has survived several changes of format, necessitated by various moves of its editor. When first issued from Lehigh University, it was merely a few 8½ x 11 sheets mimeographed on one side. Then both sides of the paper were used. In the autumn of 1945, on our removal to Barnard, the size was reduced to the present dimensions, and varityping substituted for mimeographing. Except for changes in the masthead, the format has remained the same, though the home office is now the Graduate School at Columbia. In all, there have been seventy-two numbers, including an index to the first ten volumes made by N. Lester (Anyone want to volunteer to do an index of volumes XI-XV?).

There have been other changes. For a while, Bill Payne was our able self-sacrificing Ass't Editor; John Middendorf has gladly carried on for the past five years. In one early year we

actually were able to get out seven issues; now we do well to send out four, and these are usually late. Similarly the contents are somewhat altered. Through the early 1940's the pages were filled with tragic accounts of destruction in England, and the personal columns with accounts of military and naval assignments rather than research projects. There were fewer completed works to discuss and more frustrated dreams.

In those days we apparently had illusions about the feasibility of group projects. Remember the grand plans for a supplement to Crane and Kaye, of a subject index to eighteenth-century periodicals, of a check-list of books containing subscribers names? Are we now too disillusioned and jaded? We now review more books than formerly, and, as a result, have less space for amusing anecdotes or for literary quizzes. (If you wish a return to the old policy let us know). How many of you recall Dick Altick's entertaining imitations of Pope, and J. R. Moore's "Newly Discovered Letter to Captain Sympson"?

But with all the minor shifts, our interests remain the same, and our goals. We still welcome as a subscriber anyone who has the slightest interest in the English Restoration and eighteenth-century periods. We look forward to the discoveries, the new editions, the stimulating controversies and puzzling problems of the next five years with our customary zest. Bear with us when we are late, and keep sending in queries and suggestions, and we promise to keep going as long as we can. Unless someone else is eager to take over the job.

### THE DIARY OF JOHN EVELYN

Undoubtedly the major scholarly publication in our field for 1955 is Esmond de Beer's superb edition of the diaries of John Evelyn (Clarendon Press). As many of you may know, all the old versions of this important literary and historical work have been incomplete and inaccurate. Now for the first time the diaries are printed in full from the manuscripts belonging to the present John Evelyn. More than a third of the text of the diaries has never before been in print (the former standard version ran to about 313,000 words; this new one to about 560,000), and readers will find changes in much of the rest. To be sure, many of the passages now printed for the first time are merely Evelyn's notes on long-forgotten sermons, but these too round out the picture of



seventeenth-century life. For all intents and purposes, this is a new and exciting personal description of the age, invaluable both for reference and for casual dipping.

The annotation by de Beer is in the finest modern tradition. We won't say how long he has been working on the transcription and editing, but the result justifies all his years of patient labor. As a reviewer in the London Times remarked, the volumes "are a beautiful example, alike on the editorial and the production sides, of how a classic work should be handled."

In our last number we inadvertently gave an incorrect price for the edition. For this we hastily apologize. Unfortunately, because of rising printing costs the price for the six handsome volumes containing 3,296 pages has now been set at fifteen guineas.

### M.L.A. PROGRAMS

At the meetings in Chicago, which unfortunately we were unable to attend, the following papers were read: Haskell M. Block, "The European Novel in Its First Century"; Ian P. Watt, "Clarissa -- 'le premier roman du monde'"; Leo Hughes, "The Status of Farce in the Eighteenth Century"; Northrup Frye, "Towards Defining an Age of Sensibility"; W. R. Keast, "The Element of Art in Gibbon's History"; Norman F. Maclean, "Personification but Not Poetry." The Group VII program was devoted wholly to critical problems in Swift: Ricardo Quintana, "Appearance and Reality: Modes of Ironic Perception and Statement in Swift"; Harold D. Kelling, "The Mechanical Operation: Biographical Information and the Interpretation of Swift's Works"; R. S. Crane, "The Rationale of the Fourth Voyage." A conference on the proposed Subject Index to Eighteenth-Century Periodicals was scheduled for Tuesday afternoon, Dec. 27, under the leadership of W. O. S. Sutherland, Jr.

### JOHNSON AND OGILVIE

From A. D. McKillop (Rice) comes the following:

"On the publication of Boswell's Life of Johnson, the Reverend John Ogilvie wrote from Midmar, Aberdeenshire, protesting against Boswell's report of the conversation at the Mitre, July 6, 1763, which culminated in the famous line about 'the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees' (Edinburgh Magazine, or Literary

Miscellany, XIV [November, 1791], 355-57). Ogilvie says that as an inexperienced young man he introduced no topics, and that praise of Scotland is the last topic he would have introduced in that company; but when Johnson spoke unfavorably of Scotland, he mildly remarked that some parts, such as Lothian and Fife, were equal to England in beauty and fertility. His account of the punch line may be given in his own words:

I do not recollect that I said anything concerning its wild and noble prospects. Yet it is very possible that I may have mentioned the rude magnificence of its highland regions. To all this Dr. Johnson replied simply in these words: -- "Sir, I believe the best thing in Scotland is the road to England." My memory preserves no stronger trace of the roar of applause wherewith so many well-bred men concurred in honouring this enunciation, than my ear retains at this moment of its sound. My answer I distinctly recollect was, that opinion was the judge of that matter; and that in mine, the best thing in England was the road to Scotland, for which, I added, that I very soon proposed to set out. Of Dr. Goldsmith's part of the conversation I have no knowledge. -- Certainly, I should have merited censure for affirming that the country around Edinburgh is either rich or poor: for, although I know that the environs of that city are highly cultivated, I am ignorant of the quality of the soil.

Other sententious comments of Ogilvie's may be omitted. But his footnote-postscript, preserving a scrap of Johnson's correspondence, is worth noting. He remarks that he saw Johnson only once more after this meeting, and continues:

I sent him however a copy of my inquiry into the causes of infidelity, by Mr. Richardson, a Bookseller in London, with a short letter, wherein I reminded him of our meeting at the Mitre Tavern, as an event that might have been erased from his memory. His letter to Mr. R--, who transmitted to him the book along with the few lines I had written, is now before me in his own handwriting. I transcribe it verbatim.

Sir,

You will do me a favour, by returning my respectful thanks to Dr. Ogilvie, for the kind present of his book; and let him know that I take amiss to be suspected of having forgotten him. I hope we shall never forget each other. I am,

Sir,

Feb. 23,  
1783.

Your humble servant,  
Sam. Johnson.



## POPE STUDIES

Recently published are two important critical books on Pope, both inspired originally by Maynard Mack at Yale. Aubrey Williams's Pope's Dunciad: a Study of Its Meaning (L.S.U. Press in the U.S.; Methuen in London) is an admirable study of the various levels of meaning in the poem. He traces its development through the various stages, and shows how the significance was enriched and deepened. The book is filled with stimulating analyses and shrewd suggestions. This is the kind of critical work which really does interpret a difficult piece of literature for modern readers. The parts we found most rewarding were the discussion of the correspondence between the progress of the Dunces and the progress of the Lord Mayor's procession in Pope's day, and the analysis of the use of inverted Christian themes and situations. Certainly we will never be able to teach the Dunciad again without constant use of Williams's book.

Rebecca Price Parkin's The Poetic Workmanship of Alexander Pope (Univ. of Minnesota Press) makes available in permanent form a number of stimulating articles which have appeared in various periodicals. The articles have been expanded and revised, and much new material added, so that the resulting book becomes a thorough analysis of many of the chief facets of Pope's art. The author discusses such elements as irony, humor, parallelism, metaphor, tension, tonal variation, narrative elements, genre, imitation, and Pope's approach to correctible evil. While much of what she has to say has been anticipated by such critics as Mack, Tillotson, Wimsatt, and others, hers is a valuable bringing together of the new approaches to Pope's craftsmanship.

John Butt's "Pope's Poetical Manuscripts," the Warton Lecture on English Poetry for the British Academy, 1954, has been separately reprinted from the Proceedings of the British Academy (price 5 shillings). For anyone interested in the development of the Epistle to Arbuthnot it will be of absorbing interest. Included are photographs of passages from the Morgan Library MS. MA. 352, and the Huntington MS. HM. 6006.

George Sherburn's great edition of Pope's correspondence has actually been announced in some booksellers' catalogues. We hope to see it by spring at least.

Early in 1956 the Norlin Library of the University of Colorado plans a Pope exhibit, to recognize the bi-centenary of Joseph Warton's Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope. As Henry Pettit comments, "The anniversary of Warton's attack on Pope's reputation seems a cheerfully ironic occasion for celebrating the works of the greatest English satirist."

For Vol. I of the Twickenham edition of Pope, the only one not published so far, there will be two editors: Emile Audra and Aubrey Williams (Yale). Both names will appear on the title page. It is hoped that the work will be pushed to completion with all proper speed.

We list also the following articles: Douglas Knight, "The Development of Pope's Iliad Preface: a Study of the Manuscript" in MLQ for September; T. O. Mabbott, "'Bounce to Fop' by Swift and Pope" in N & Q for October; and A. Davenport, "Florio and Pope" in the same issue.

### JOHNSON AND BOSWELL NOTES

We keep hearing of other Dictionary exhibitions about the country. Louis C. Zucker writes of one at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, which was to open on November 18. Among the items to be shown are some which have been loaned by Fritz Liebert of Yale. Julia Hysham in November helped to arrange an exhibition at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs devoted to the Johnson circle. Included were a first edition of the Dictionary, some manuscripts of Johnson, Mrs. Piozzi, Boswell, and various first editions. From all accounts it was a success in every way. Max J. Herzberg reports in the December issue of Word Study about another in Los Angeles.

We have word from Albert Hall-Johnson in Buenos Aires concerning the failure to hold the annual Johnson supper in September, for which all tickets had been sold and everything prepared. As he comments, the supper could not be held "due to the Revolution of the previous day, which made its cancellation well worth while."

The program for meetings of the London Johnson Society for the remainder of the winter is as follows. 21 January, Oliver D. Savage, "Two London Lovers -- Johnson and Dickens"; 18 February,



R. W. Ketton-Cremer, "Samuel Johnson and Thomas Gray"; 17 March, S. C. Roberts, "Doctor Johnson as Biographer"; 21 April, F. W. M. Draper, "Johnson's Friend Baretti." Visiting scholars will always be welcome at 3 P.M. at the Alpine Club, 74 South Audley St., London W.1.

H. Jack Haden writes that early this year the Middle Temple Library received a valuable collection of books from a barrister of the Inn, Baron Cornelius Ver Heyden de Lancey, and among them is a volume in which Samuel Johnson's signature appears twice on the front fly-leaf with the date 1775 beneath the top one. The book is L'Homme de Cour de Baltasar Gracian, traduit & commenté par le Sieur Amelot Houssaie (6th edition, 1707). We don't see it listed in the sale of Johnson's library, but perhaps it was one of the miscellaneous volumes. Or perhaps we missed it in our cursory search. Anyone know more about the volume?

James J. Lynch writes that the rebuilding of St. Clement Danes is progressing rapidly. The crypt has been completely cleaned out, and all the human remains are to be gathered into a common grave, to be marked with an appropriate plaque.

We are delighted to see that R. W. Chapman's new volume of selections from the works of Johnson has been published. It should prove useful in the classroom, as well as for general reading. So far, we haven't seen a copy.

The following articles should be listed: Donald and Mary Hyde, "Contemporary Collectors VI: the Hyde Collection," The Book Collector, Autumn 1955; W. R. Keast, "Self-Quotation in Johnson's Dictionary," N & Q for September; "In Company with Dr. Johnson: How a Great-Grandfather Missed His Opportunity," London Times, October 22, 1955; J. Gilmour, "Mrs. Piozzi and the Metres of Boethius," N & Q for November; Ellen D. Leyburn, "'No Romantick Absurdities or Incredible Fictions': the Relation of Johnson's Rasselas to Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia," PMLA for December; E. L. McAdam, Jr., "Johnson, Percy, and Warton," PMLA for December; Gwin J. Kolb, "Boswell and Johnson -- the Years of Their Youth," Virginia Quarterly Review for Autumn, 1955; S. C. Roberts, "Dr. Johnson as a Churchman," Church Quarterly Review for December.

How many of you spotted the reference to Johnson in the Mary Worth comic strip?

## NEWS FROM WORCESTERSHIRE

From H. Jack Haden (George St., Wordsley) comes news that in September the Stourbridge Town Council named two roads on the new municipal housing estate at Pedmore Fields "Dr. Johnson Road" and "Boswell Road." As Haden comments, "Possibly Johnson roamed over these fields when as a youth he visited Cornelius Ford at Pedmore. As far as I am aware Boswell has no association with Stourbridge, but I presume the Town Council considered that it would be wrong to have a Dr. Johnson Road without a Boswell Road in close proximity. The reason the road is called Dr. Johnson and not Samuel Johnson or just Johnson Road is, I presume, because the majority of the borough's residents would jump to the conclusion that the road was being named after a Mr. Samuel Johnson, a well known resident of the town who owns a fleet of motor coaches."

Haden also adds that a few years ago a road at Wollaston, on the opposite side of the borough from Pedmore, was named Wentworth Road after John Wentworth, the headmaster of the school when Johnson was at Stourbridge. "One must concede tact to the Council in naming widely separated roads after the master and the youth to whom he was severe."

## MISCELLANEOUS NEWS ITEMS

As usual, we welcome the annual bibliography of English literature 1660-1800, appearing in the July Philological Quarterly. All congratulations to G. S. Alleman (Rutgers), John Loftis (Stanford), and Charles Woods (Iowa), who now do the compiling. Theirs is an invaluable service.

We are pleased to see announced a revised second edition of the Bredvold, McKillop and Whitney anthology, Eighteenth Century Poetry and Prose (Ronald Press). A number of new selections have been added, which will increase its usefulness.

Arthur Secord writes from London about the magnificent celebration at the University of London on the installation of the Queen Mother as Chancellor. Of the 138 universities represented 30 were from the U.S.A. A number of English professors served as official representatives: R. C. Bald (Chicago), E. A. Walter (Michigan), Irvin Ehrenpreis (Indiana), Mark Eccles (Wisconsin),



W. D. Dunkel (Rochester), Merle Bevington (Duke), and Secord (Illinois). From the continent were several others: S. Monod (Caen), son-in-law of the Fielding critic, Digeon; Rene Pruvost (Strasbourg), who has written on early English writers of fiction; H. M. Flasdieck (Heidelberg); and E. T. Senft (Göttingen). The accounts of the dinners, luncheons, receptions makes us doubly sorry we were not in London this autumn. James Sutherland and Geoffrey Tillotson, we hear, were active in making preparations.

Although we normally do not pass on purely social news, we cannot refrain from commenting on the recent announcement of the engagement of Susan Hilles, daughter of the Chairman of the English Department at Yale, to Geoffrey Bush, son of Douglas Bush of Harvard. At last the breach between Johnson and Milton is to be symbolically healed by this happy union. And what a prospect for the future!

Even if we are a little late, we want to send congratulations and best wishes to D. Nichol Smith, who this autumn celebrated his eightieth birthday.

We are sad to have to announce that the appearance of the first volume of the new Dryden edition has been delayed, and will not appear for several more months. We look forward to it eagerly.

Cecil Price (University College of Wales, Aberystwyth) is preparing an edition of the letters of Richard Brinsley Sheridan and is eager to trace any of his correspondence which may be in private hands or in out-of-the-way collections. We hope that you will let him know if you have any suggestions of places to search.

Eric Freeman (British Medical Ass'n, 195 Newport Rd., Cardiff, Wales) is interested in Richard Fenton (1747-1821), a Welsh poet and barrister, and would be glad to know of any information about him.

We have never commented on the fascinating catalogue from the St. Ronan Bookshoppe, in New Haven, filled with unbelievable bargains, largely from the eighteenth century. All along we have been hoping to see a continuation. Certainly for specialists in our field the various items were enough to send thrills down to the very tip of the spine.

Bill Wimsatt's thorough search into Pope iconography continues. Last year nine new drawings of Pope by Richardson turned up in England. There never seems to be an end. We wish we could lure other scholars into similar investigations on major eighteenth-century figures.

William H. Dewart, Jr. sends the name of a researcher at the British Museum and the Public Record Office, willing to undertake small jobs for American scholars. Her name is Miss Vera J. Ledger, 402 Holly Lodge Mansions, London N.6. Dewart describes her as able and friendly, and anxious to have more American clients.

January 17, 1956 is the 250th anniversary of the birth of Benjamin Franklin, and there will be numerous commemorations during the year. We will be glad to hear news of what is planned.

### SOME NEW BOOKS

What is there left to say in praise of The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence? We have run out of adjectives of praise, and must fall back on the trite expression "is a worthy successor to earlier volumes." This we gladly say about volumes 28 and 29, the correspondence with William Mason, which have just been published. The editors are W. S. Lewis, Grover Cronin, and Charles Bennett. The numbering may puzzle some of you, since the last issued was Vol. 19. But space has been left for further Mann volumes and other correspondences.

"One of the great achievements of the year," so Esmond de Beer calls the first volume of The Journals of Captain James Cook, edited by J. C. Beaglehole (Cambridge Univ. Press). The complete work will ultimately be in four volumes, with a separate portfolio of maps and charts. This is the first authoritative edition, transcribed from the manuscripts in Cook's own hand.

We owe a debt of gratitude to James Sutherland and Terence Spencer for finally getting into print the lectures and addresses of W. P. Ker. More than thirty years after his death we are thus given an opportunity to see what it was like to have been one of his students at University College, London. The lectures, published by Clarendon, make very pleasant reading. To be sure, some of the generalizations may seem dated, and there is not much analysis of literary texts, but there is much urbane common sense. Many of the topics lie in our period: Samuel Butler, Dryden, Burke, Burns, Crabbe, William Gilpin, "Prose Writers from



Locke to Gibbon"; and Johnson, Pope and Swift are constantly referred to.

A very valuable reference tool for all of us is William Matthews' British Autobiographies: an Annotated Bibliography of British Autobiographies Published or Written before 1951. Containing over 6,000 entries, it will prove an excellent guide for research workers, and for those merely interested in the genre. It is published by the University of California Press.

We have not yet seen Joseph Burke's edition of William Hogarth's Analysis of Beauty (Oxford Univ. Press), the first scholarly edition of this important work on aesthetics. More about it later.

V. de S. Pinto has compiled a useful little guide to biographical works by and about 17th-century worthies in his Seventeenth Century Biographies (National Book League Readers' Guide).

Other recent works to be listed are: Mary E. Knapp, A Checklist of Verse by David Garrick (Univ. of Virginia Press); C. V. Wedgwood, Edward Gibbon (British Book Council); Poems and Prose of John Dryden, selected by Douglas Grant (Penguin Books); Frank Taylor, Hand-List of the Bagshawe Muniments Deposited in the Johns Rylands Library (Rylands Library); Phyllis Greenacre, Swift and Carroll (International Universities Press); W. S. Clark, The Early Irish Stage: the Beginnings to 1720 (Clarendon); W. H. Lewis, The Sunset of the Splendid Century [the Life of the Duc du Maine] (Eyre and Spottiswoode); S. Maccoby, English Radicalism, 1786-1832 (Allen and Unwin); L. A. G. Strong, Dr. Quicksilver, 1660-1742 (Melrose); O. A. Sherrard, Lord Chatham (Bodley Head); William Blake, Songs of Innocence and Experience (a color facsimile by the Trianon Press for the William Blake Trust); Donald Davie, Articulate Energy (Routledge and Kegan Paul). This last is a stimulating, perhaps controversial work, which you all ought to see. We also look forward to seeing David Daiches' new anthology Critical Approaches to Literature (Prentice-Hall), which will include a good deal on Dryden and Johnson.

## RECENT ARTICLES

Because of lack of space we shall hold over until next time our usual list of periodical essays.

## ANOTHER JOHNSONIAN ANECDOTE

Bertram Davis (Dickinson) sends in another story, perhaps apocryphal, which may be worth passing on. He found it in Liber Facetarium, Being a Collection of Curious and Interesting Anecdotes (1st American ed., Boston 1811, pp. 257-58). "Dr. Johnson sitting one evening at Sir Joshua Reynolds's in company with a number of ladies and gentlemen of his acquaintance, the former, by way of heightening the good humour of the company, agreed to toast ordinary women, and to have them matched with ordinary men. In this round, one of the ladies gave Mrs. Williams (the well-known inmate of Dr. Johnson's house, who was both very plain in her person and nearly blind), when another instantly paired her with Dr. Goldsmith. This whimsical union set the company laughing, and in particular so pleased the lady who gave the first toast, that though she had some pique with the lady who gave Dr. Goldsmith, she ran round the table, kissed her, and said she forgave her every thing past for the apropos of her last toast. Johnson, who saw and heard all this, and who did not like to have two of his most intimate friends thus made the butt of ridicule, growled out, 'Aye, this puts me in mind of an observation of Swift's, who says, that the quarrels of women are made up like those of ancient kings: there is always an animal sacrificed on the occasion.'"

## DR. JOHNSON AND J. ROBERTS, PUBLISHER

Arthur Sherbo (Illinois) writes:

"Dr. Johnson's Life of Savage (1744) was 'Printed for J. Roberts,' 'between whom and Johnson,' says Boswell, 'I have not traced any connection, except the casual one of publication' (Life, I, 165). Roberts published Johnson's Miscellaneous Observations on Macbeth in 1745 and the revised Life of Barretier in 1744 (Life, I, 165, n. 2). There is a slight connection between Johnson's Life of Savage and J. Roberts which precedes the publication of Johnson's biography of his friend. The 1727 Life of Mr. Richard Savage, which Johnson used in his own account, had been printed for J. Roberts, and I suspect that Johnson's work was published by Roberts as the result of some agreement reached between the two men on the basis of Robert's connection with the earlier life of Savage.